

March 25, 2014

FACT SHEET: U.S. Counter Nuclear Smuggling Activities

The United States is committed to ensuring it is fully prepared to manage a domestic radiological or nuclear smuggling incident regardless of whether material originates within the United States or overseas.

We maintain a Counter Nuclear Smuggling (CNS) Team that has the personnel, equipment, capabilities, and legal authorities to respond quickly and effectively to nuclear smuggling incidents. The CNS Team achieves its objectives through detection and operational activities. Many federal departments and agencies are engaged in this effort, including the Department of Justice, through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); the intelligence community; Department of Homeland Security; Department of Energy; Department of Defense; Department of State; and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. These federal entities also work closely with state, local, and tribal governments as well as with the private sector, other countries, and international organizations. Each Department and Agency possesses both unique and complementary capabilities and legal authorities to respond to a radiological or nuclear smuggling incident.

The FBI has taken recent steps to strengthen U.S. capacities to ensure a strong law enforcement response and coordinated criminal investigation of nuclear smuggling threats and incidents within the United States. As part of this mission, the FBI has established the Radiological Nuclear Search Operations (RNSO) framework for all domestic incidents, coordinating the law enforcement and investigative response of applicable U.S. Government investigative assets, as well as other federal, state, local, and tribal agencies as required. If a threat is deemed credible, the FBI's newly-established Radiological Nuclear Strategic Group is capable of coordinating the identification and deployment of specialized interagency elements used to support the RNSO in locating, identifying, and interdicting the threat.

To assist in an international nuclear smuggling incident, the FBI utilizes its international network of Legal Attachés and WMD Assistant Legal Attachés to work with foreign counterparts, as well as international organizations such as INTERPOL, to develop lead information on suspected smuggling networks. At the request of the foreign government, the FBI is also capable of deploying investigative and laboratory assets to assist in the response to an international nuclear smuggling incident.

The United States encourages international partners to strengthen capabilities to investigate smuggling networks, interdict and remove trafficked material from the black market, and arrest perpetrators. At the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, 19 countries signed a Statement of Activity and Cooperation to Counter Nuclear Smuggling (CNS), and others announced steps to strengthen counter nuclear smuggling capacities. An updated CNS statement was signed in 2014 at the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague, and many countries pledged to continue the discussion on this important topic and encouraged others to join.

In February 2014, the United States and the Institute for Transuranium Elements of the European Commission Joint Research Center held a Countering Nuclear and Radiological Smuggling Workshop for Nuclear Security Summit states. Thirty-eight governments and observing international organizations attended the workshop, which featured a series of hands-on demonstrations and exercises in the areas of

nuclear material detection, law enforcement investigations, and nuclear forensics – all of which are integral to effectively counter transnational nuclear smuggling networks.

The United States actively works with international partners, including INTERPOL and the International Atomic Energy Agency, to improve counter nuclear smuggling capacity worldwide. Since 2011, the United States has worked with 8 countries to strengthen national counter nuclear smuggling capabilities. The Department of State negotiates politically binding joint action plans with key countries to strengthen capabilities to prevent, detect, and respond to incidents of nuclear smuggling. The Department of Energy supports these initiatives by providing detection systems and training to these and other countries. The Department of Defense also supports these initiatives by securing vulnerable nuclear material at sensitive sites by providing equipment and training.

Through the FBI and DOE, the United States supports the INTERPOL CBRNE Sub-Directorate. In support of the 2012 Summit, INTERPOL initiated Operation Fail Safe, an information-sharing tool that supports the international law enforcement community in tracking the transnational movement of individuals involved in the illicit trafficking of radioactive or nuclear materials.